

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—Thursday, June 29, 2000

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

As Independence Day approaches this Millennium Year, we praise You and bless You, Lord God, for the birth, life, and continuing development of this great Nation, the United States of America.

Whenever and wherever in the course of human events courage and commitment cause a people to take a stand on self-evident truths, we rejoice. Before You and in You, the Creator, all are created equal.

Endowed by You, the Creator, with certain unalienable rights; we as a people accept as well certain responsibilities to protect and defend always for ourselves and for others life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

With a firm reliance on the protection of Your Divine Providence, we renew our pledge today to serve this Nation, knowing full well that the power of this assembly is derived from the consent of the governed.

In You we place our solemn trust, now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. TURNER led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill and concurrent resolutions of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 3051. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior, the Bureau of Reclamation, to conduct a feasibility study on the Jicarilla Apache Reservation in the State of New Mexico, and for other purposes.

H. Con. Res. 333. Concurrent resolution providing for the acceptance of a statue of Chief Washakie, presented by the people of Wyoming, for placement in National Statuary Hall, and for other purposes.

H. Con. Res. 344. Concurrent resolution permitting the use of the Rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony to present the Congressional Gold Medal to Father Theodore Hesburgh.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill and a concurrent resolution of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 2719. An act to provide for business development and trade promotion for Native Americans, and for other purposes.

S. Con. Res. 125. Concurrent resolution providing for a conditional adjournment or recess of the Senate and a conditional adjournment of the House of Representatives.

The message also announced that the Senate agrees to the amendment of the House to the bill (S. 1515) "An Act to amend the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act, and for other purposes."

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain 10 one-minutes on each side.

PARTIAL BIRTH ABORTION DECISION

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Supreme Court, by the narrowest of margins, ruled that the Nebraska law banning partial birth abortion was unconstitutional. Actually, partial birth abortion is not an abortion. It is a pre-term delivery that results in infanticide.

Partial-birth abortion is so gruesome and barbaric that it is beyond the pale of any nation wishing to be known as civilized. It is in every case unjustifiable. It is in no case the lesser of two evils. It violates every principle of dignity, morality, ethics, and law that this Nation has stood for since its founding.

The Supreme Court, acting as an oligarchy of five, has imposed infanticide on a decent nation. Sadly, it is declared the murder of innocent, healthy newborns to be within the bounds of the law.

The court used Roe v. Wade as the basis for their decision, showing how

radical the Roe decision really was. This ruling, like the Dredd Scott decision, has excluded a whole class of human beings from constitutional protection.

Shame on the court. This is a dark day for America.

SENIOR CITIZENS SUFFERED BIG LOSS YESTERDAY

(Mr. TURNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, last night on this floor, the big drug manufacturers won a big victory, and our senior citizens suffered a big loss.

The big drug companies spent \$100 million on a lobbying campaign that paid dividends, but only by a margin of three votes, and only after the rules were manipulated to deny the House Democrats the opportunity to vote on a real plan providing real relief for our seniors who are paying the high cost of prescription drugs.

Looking out for the big drug manufacturers instead of our seniors led our Republican leadership to pass a plan that will funnel hundreds of millions of dollars into the hands of big insurance companies rather than help our seniors afford to pay their medicines.

Even the big insurance companies say it will not work. In fact, the President of Blue Cross/Blue Shield said, and I quote, "This idea of a private sector drug benefit provides false hope to America's seniors because it is neither workable nor affordable." We can do better. Let us work together to be sure we do better. Our seniors deserve no less.

CONGRESS ANSWERED PLEAS OF NEVADA'S SENIORS

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, let us come back to reality for a minute. For months now, our seniors have been asking, even begging, for relief from the high cost of prescription drugs that they have to take.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand here in this well and announce that this Republican Congress heard and answered the calls of those senior citizens.

Yesterday, the Republicans passed the Bipartisan Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit plan that will benefit

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

every Medicare senior. Our bipartisan plan provides for a voluntary, affordable, and available prescription drug benefit to all Medicare beneficiaries in need.

We have created a much-needed entitlement for every Medicare beneficiary, which, at the same time, allows seniors to choose the plan they want, and yet keeps Washington out of their medicine cabinets.

While the Democrats took a walk on our seniors yesterday, Republicans are lowering drug prices and providing real prescription drug relief and benefits and yet fighting for our seniors at the same time.

“ROGUE STATES” NOW CALLED “STATES OF CONCERN”

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, I have heard it all. The State Department is doing away with the term “rogue states” for Libya and Iran. They are now called “states of concern”.

Now if that is not enough to confuse Henny Youngman, a State Department spokesman said, and I quote, “If these states of concern continue to be of concern because they have no concern about the concerns that concern America, then we are prepared to go beyond concern.”

Beam me up. These double-speaking, bric-a-bracking, ratch-a-fratching, pantaloonicists need their brain examined by a concerned proctologist.

I yield back the concerns for any common sense left at the State Department.

JEWISH PRISONERS IN IRAN

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I condemn the government of Iran for its actions against 13 imprisoned Jews.

The official crime that these men have been charged with is espionage on behalf of the United States and Israel, but their real crime was being Jewish in a country that does not tolerate freedom of religion.

The Iranian mullahs have concocted a “show trial” that Joseph Stalin would be proud of, void of any evidence or legitimate legal proceedings.

During this scripted play, nine of the accused were coerced into a nationally televised confession. This staged trial has been running since April without any tangible evidence.

Kept out of the trial are the families of the accused, the press, human rights advocates, and the general public.

These brave and devout men have been in prison for over a year, almost

entirely bereft of any kind of legal representation. While this masquerade of a trial will soon conclude, these 13 may soon be executed. The world will be watching and praying that these courageous men will be released.

SHIRAZ 13 VERDICT TO COME ANY DAY

(Mr. WEINER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, on this Independence Day, Americans should keep the Shiraz 13 in our thoughts and prayers. Since March of 1999, the government of Iran has held these people simply because of their religion.

The trial is over, and it looked more like a kangaroo court. The investigator, the prosecutor, and the judge were the same person, someone who is affectionately known in Iran as the butcher.

The verdict will come any day now, and we are all watching. Will this new so-called moderate government of Iran free the Shiraz 13?

Until we know, we should not loosen our import restrictions on Iran on rugs, nuts and caviar which have been authorized to be imported here as of the end of 1999.

This 4th of July, we should send a strong message about where the U.S. Congress stands. Today in the Agriculture Appropriations bill, the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) and I will be offering an amendment to cut the funding from the Agriculture import budget that it takes to implement these loosening of these export quotas. Let us send a message this 4th of July.

TOP TEN REASONS TO VOTE FOR H.R. 1304, QUALITY HEALTH-CARE COALITION ACT OF 2000

(Mr. BALLENGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, when the doctor cartel bill comes up this afternoon, I will give my colleagues 10 reasons to vote for it.

First, they like what OPEC has done to oil prices.

Second, they think that too many low-income children have health insurance.

They think Americans pay too little for health insurance.

They would like to increase the number of uninsured Americans to a nice round number, say, like 50 million.

They would like to reduce prescription drug coverage among seniors.

They would like to increase out-of-pocket health care cost.

They think that the best way to spend the surplus is on doctors' fees.

They think that people's wages and fringe benefits are just too high and they would like to reduce them.

They think doctors should change patients' medications for political reasons and not for medication.

Finally, they think that the most pressing problem in our health care system today is that doctors make too little money.

I ask my colleagues to watch how they vote on this.

13 JEWISH CITIZENS ARRESTED SOLELY BECAUSE OF RELIGION

(Mr. SHERMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, in March of 1999, Iran arrested 13 of its Jewish citizens solely because of their religion. The trial has just concluded, and it was a show trial worthy of Joseph Stalin: no evidence, but confessions, not showing the guilt of the accused, but showing their justified fear.

The prosecutor is also the judge, is also the jury. Of course no one is allowed to view the trial.

□ 1015

These men have been in prison, most of them, for a year and a half, and it is time for Iran to let them go. The charges against them are ridiculous, because in Iran's discriminatory society no one of the Jewish faith would be allowed near anything of national security significance. So certainly the CIA would not hire from this minority group in any search for spies.

The verdict will be issued on Saturday. We in this House must take a stand. The agricultural appropriations bill comes up, and I will have an amendment to deny the use of funds to allow the importation of agricultural products from Iran and, thus, reinstitute the policy of Ronald Reagan to prevent those goods from coming in at this time.

PORKER OF THE WEEK AWARD

(Mr. HEFLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, imagine how many single family homes and apartment buildings could be built for \$1 billion. That is the amount the Inspector General at the Department of Housing and Urban Development reports has been wastefully spent.

In several different reports, the Inspector General details wasteful spending ranging from overpayments to pure abuse. One report identified \$935 million in Federal housing subsidy overpayments during 1998 in HUD's assisted living programs. The overpayments resulted from the HUD's inability to accurately know if recipients qualified based on income or housing benefits. It has been estimated that \$935 million